

Claims

~~I claim:~~

1. A method for facilitating and tracking personal referrals, comprising:
 - generating a unique identifier that is associated exclusively with the pairing of one individual and one offer;
 - sending to said individual an electronic-mail message that provides a hyperlink to or contains a Web page whose address or contents includes said unique identifier or a transformation thereof; and
 - providing in said Web page a means of inputting the electronic-mail address of persons whom said individual wishes to refer.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said unique identifier or a transformation thereof is included in a uniform resource locator.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining whether said individual has previously been sent an electronic-mail message about said offer.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining whether said individual has previously opted out of receiving all such electronic-mail messages.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining whether said individual has previously opted out of receiving electronic-mail messages pertaining to a category of items that contains said offer.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining the party whose referral caused said offer to be made to said individual and whether said individual has previously opted out of receiving electronic-mail messages pertaining to offers referred by said party.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing in said Web page a means of accepting said offer.
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
notifying the sponsor of said offer in case of an acceptance by said individual.
9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing in said Web page a means of opting out of receiving all such electronic-mail messages.
10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing in said Web page a means of opting out of receiving electronic-mail messages pertaining to one or more categories of such offers.
11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing in said Web page a means of opting out of receiving electronic-mail messages pertaining to offers referred by the party whose referral caused said offer to be made to said individual.
12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether said offer is still valid and substituting the latest version of said offer.
13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
sending electronic-mail messages to said persons who were referred by said individual.
14. An apparatus for facilitating and tracking personal referrals, comprising:
a storage device; and
a processor connected to said storage device,
said storage device storing a program for controlling said processor; and
said processor operative with said program to:

generate a unique identifier that is associated exclusively with the pairing of one individual and one offer;
 send to said individual an electronic-mail message that provides a hyperlink to or contains a Web page whose address or contents includes said unique identifier or a transformation thereof; and
 provide in said Web page a means of inputting the electronic-mail address of persons whom said individual wishes to refer.

15. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said processor is further operative with said processor to determine whether said individual has previously been sent an electronic-mail message about said offer.
16. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said processor is further operative with said processor to determine whether said individual has previously opted out of receiving all such electronic-mail messages.
17. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said processor is further operative with said processor to determine whether said individual has previously opted out of receiving electronic-mail messages pertaining to a category of items that contains said offer.
18. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said processor is further operative with said processor to determine the party whose referral caused said offer to be made to said individual and whether said individual has previously opted out of receiving electronic-mail messages pertaining to offers referred by said party.
19. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said processor is further operative with said processor to notify the sponsor of said offer in case of an acceptance by said individual.
20. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said processor is further operative with said processor to send electronic-mail messages to said persons who were referred by said individual in the case when said offer is still valid.

Add a2 >